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Author(s): H. G. Evelyn-White

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## THE THRONE OF ZEUS AT OLYMPIA.

THE title of this paper may appear too wide, since its main object is to establish, if possible, the position of the paintings by Panaenus; but discussion of this one point necessarily involves consideration of certain others—themselves far from unimportant—and thus a more comprehensive designation is needed. It need hardly be said that no theory of reconstruction of the Throne as a whole is here attempted.

It may be convenient to state at the outset the evidence used, and to comment generally upon it. In the first place we have the literary evidence, the account by Pausanias: careful, detailed, and, in my opinion, the work of an eye-witness. Its great shortcoming is that it leaves undecided the



FIG. 1 (2:1). (Florence.)

*relation* of the parts and details to one another. Secondly, there is numismatic evidence, which is of high value. Besides the coin which shows the head of Zeus, there are three coins which show the statue as a whole (Figs. 1, 2, 3): one from the left front (Fig. 2); the others (Figs. 1 and 3) from the left and right sides respectively. These three alone are relevant to the present matter. All are coins of Hadrian, and therefore may be trusted to give a true copy and not a free reproduction of the original. This fact is important as we have no other evidence to systematise the

account of Pausanias: but at the same time it must be remembered that minute detail, relief-work, and the like, cannot be reproduced on so small an object as a coin.

Two views are generally current at the present time as to the position of the paintings. (i) Mr. A. S. Murray relegates them to the intercolumnar screens of the cella, traces of which have been actually discovered. This view, which divorces the paintings from the throne altogether, has been accepted in the official publication on the German excavations at Olympia. (ii) But Professor E. A. Gardner in a paper on the same subject,<sup>1</sup> entirely demolishes Mr. Murray's position. I will only add here that the statements of Pausanias would be entirely misleading if the screens were placed at some distance from the statue. He states that it was impossible to go under the Throne by reason of the screens (which Mr. Murray admits were furnished with doors); but would any modern guide-book to a cathedral say 'it is impossible to enter the choir because of the screens'? I think the parallel is a fair one. It is unnecessary to give a detailed account of Professor Gardner's theory; enough that there seem to be grave objections to his arrangement of the paintings in frames formed by the intersection of the *κανόνες* and *κίονες*. The reconstruction here attempted is in many respects, though not altogether, a return to the older theory, *e.g.*, as represented by Brunn.

We may now proceed to examine the parts of the throne which seem to bear upon the present inquiry. These are (i) The decoration of the *κανόνες*, (ii) The position of the *κίονες*, (iii) The nature of the *ἐρύματα*.

### I.—*The κανόνες.*

Pausanias gives an account of the decoration of the cross-bars, which may be summarised as follows:—on the front bar were (originally) eight figures; on the side and back bars was represented a battle of Greeks and Amazons. We are told nothing *directly* as to the material or technique of these figures. However, we can confidently assume them to have been of gold and ivory. As to technique, we may note that Pausanias calls the figures upon the front bar *ἀγάλματα*, which points to figures in the round and not in relief.<sup>2</sup> This point seems to be borne out by the second and third of the Elean coins mentioned (Figs. 2 and 3), which show upon the front cross-bar a small upstanding projection, evidently a human figure. Relief work, as has been noted, could hardly be shown upon a coin. Further, the argument may perhaps be strengthened by the incidental note of Pausanias that one of the eight figures upon the bar had disappeared. Doubtless we are to understand that it had been stolen. Now a figure in the round, fixed only at the feet, might be easily wrenched off by a thief, whereas a relief would be

<sup>1</sup> *J.H.S.* xiv. pp. 233 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> But not necessarily (as I am reminded); *e.g.* Pausanias uses *ἄγαλμα* in speaking of the

figure of Dryops at Asine, which appears to have been a relief (see *Corolla Numismatica* p. 156).

less easily and less quickly detached. It may, then, be fairly claimed that there is cumulative evidence to show that these eight figures at least were in the round.

Some writers allow this much, but take for granted that the Amazon-battle was in relief. Brunn seems to be indefinite on this point. But, *a priori*, we should expect a uniform technique in what was really a continuous band of technique, just as normally a frieze would be of one technique. There are exceptions to this rule, but they may be put down to motives of economy, which certainly would not have been considered in the case of the Elean statue. Further, the poor effect of relief-work may be gauged from the restoration by Quatremère de Quincy. However, the best evidence on this point is furnished by the first of the Elean coins. Careful examination of a cast or of a good photographic reproduction of this coin shows four (or five ?) serrated projections upon the cross-bar.<sup>3</sup> Now just as the



FIGS. 2 and 3 (2 : 1). (Berlin.)

eagle upon the sceptre is represented by a small knob, so, it is reasonable to suppose these projections represent groups in the battle-scene.

We may, perhaps, even take a recreative flight into speculation, and supposing the number of the projections upon each side-bar to be five, assume that we have on each side five groups of two figures each, while the back-bar, where presumably the battle would have been hottest, may have had three groups of three figures each, thus making up Pausanias' total of twenty-nine. However, this distribution is alike conjectural and inessential.

We now come to the bearing of this point, which, it is hoped, has been substantiated, on the position of the paintings. If these really were figures in the round standing upon the cross-bars, it is impossible to suppose there were paintings in the spaces above the cross-bars. The panels would have been obscured by the figures; so that, if the foregoing point has been established, the paintings must be placed below the *κανόνες*.

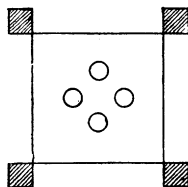
<sup>3</sup> Prof. P. Gardner was kind enough to examine the photographic reproduction of the coin in his 'Types of Greek Coins' (Pl. XV. No. 19) with me, and agreed that the projec-

tions were distinctly visible, although they hardly appear in the half-tone illustration here given (Fig. 1). The line reproduction in Bötticher's *Olympia* over-emphasises this feature.

II.—*The κίονες.*

Professor E. Gardner, in the paper already referred to, holds that the panels were divided by the intersection of the *κανών* and *κίων*, on each side. If, therefore, we relegate the paintings to the space below the bar, we must rearrange the *κίονες*, for in that case the supports would have interrupted both the paintings and the sculptures above them. We must ask then whether there is any adequate reason for this change. Now it has been often pointed out that a throne with eight visible legs would be the reverse of artistic, nor would the effect be bettered by making the extra legs (which indeed would probably be round, as their name, *κίονες*, implies) serve as part of the frame-work for the paintings. To this purely aesthetic consideration we may add direct numismatic evidence. None of the three Elean coins shows any sign whatever of a visible support, though they show the cross-bar itself clearly enough. The inference therefore is that the 'supports' were actually invisible, and this is perhaps indirectly supported by Pausanias himself, when, after mentioning the existence of the 'supports,' he goes on immediately to say that it is impossible to go underneath the Throne.

Where then, it may be asked, are the *κίονες* to be placed? In answer to this it is pertinent to ask where support was most needed. Clearly, not at the sides which were comparatively light and adequately supported by the legs, but at the point where the real weight lay, the point where the heavy torso of Zeus weighed directly upon the seat of the Throne. Here, then, we must place the supports according to the following diagram:



But is it possible to reconcile this with Pausanias' phrase, *μεταξὺ τῶν ποδῶν*? Certainly the most obvious meaning (were there nothing against it) would be 'intermediate between the legs of each side.' However, two other interpretations are possible, one or other of which I believe Pausanias intended. (i) When he said *μεταξὺ τῶν ποδῶν*, he was using an inexact but approximate phrase, meaning that the supports were on a line with the central point of each side (*μεταξύ*), but *set back* from it. (ii) The supports collectively might be said (accepting the arrangement in the diagram) to be between the legs also collectively regarded. Perhaps the second is the simpler and better of these alternatives.

Such, then, are the reasons for altering the position of the supports.

III.—*The ἐρύματα.*

We have now to show how Pausanias was able to see the supports so hidden away, and to explain the nature of the barriers. We may assume on the authority of Professor Gardner's paper, and of the plain meaning of Pausanias, that the screens formed a part of the Throne itself. Their purpose was both to hide the unsightly props from view and to add to the solidity of the whole erection. To state the case briefly, the view here adopted is that the screens rose only to the height of the cross-bars, which projected, cornice-wise, beyond them. Naturally the coins can give no evidence on this point, and we are left to what we can elicit from Pausanias, and to arguments from probability and from aesthetic considerations.

Now Pausanias uses a notable phrase. The barriers he says are *τρόπον τοίχων πεποιημένα*. As the screens were painted, he clearly does not mean that they showed courses of masonry, and there seems to be only one other possible interpretation of the phrase. The idea of a wall in its simplest terms is something long and low with *an empty space* above it. Now, if the screens had filled in each side completely, the lower part of the Throne would have given the appearance of a solid block; the idea of a wall would be quite inappropriate. If this interpretation is correct, we must think of the screens as reaching only to the cross-bars, on which stood the figures already discussed. Behind and above the figures was an open space.

Against this view of the screens it may be urged that such an open space would defeat the very purpose for which the screens were erected, to hide the supports. This objection, however, is not really valid. (i) As the visitor stood on the floor of the *cella*, his line of vision would be determined by the cross-bar and the figures upon it, so that in any case he could see no more than the bottom of the seat.<sup>4</sup> It would be impossible to see through from side to side, and so be offended by a 'vista of scaffold-like poles.' (ii) The light of the *cella* could not have been bright, and consequently the interior of the Throne would have been in practical darkness. Further, the gleam of the chryselephantine figures upon the cross-bar against the darkness within would enhance the blackness of the background, while the mere mass of the figures, and the charm of their workmanship would be sufficient to arrest the eyes of most visitors. Every great artist is also a practical psychologist. We see the same principle in mediaeval architecture, where a belfry window is designed to give light to the interior without revealing the unsightly framework within.

How then, it may be asked, did Pausanias see the supports if thus concealed? The answer is that Pausanias, like many another curious antiquary, made it his business to look into corners and dark places, and it was, no doubt by so doing that he succeeded in distinguishing the supports. And in this connexion we may add yet another consideration pointing to an

<sup>4</sup> Another instance of Pheidias' knowledge of optical laws is supplied by the Lemnian Athena: cf. Furtwängler, *Masterpieces* (Eng. Trans.), p. 21.

opening above the cross-bars. There must have been some means of access to the interior for purpose of the repairs which, as we know, were from time to time necessary. If there had been a door for the purpose, it is unlikely that Pausanias would not have mentioned it. The only alternative is to accept the theory of a space which was always open, a part of the design itself.

#### IV.—*The Paintings.*

There now remains the task of rearranging the paintings by Panaenus, in accordance with the conditions of which the existence has been demonstrated above. We have seen that they must find their place below the cross-bar, and in this position it is impossible to retain Professor E. Gardner's system, ingenious and attractive as it is. But there are independent reasons for rejecting the scheme of 'metope' and 'long' panels. (i) Pausanias gives no hint of any such arrangement: rather, his description seems to imply that the series was single and continuous. The argument from silence has a bad odour, but surely this is a case where it might well be used. (ii) If we suppose with Professor Gardner that there were two lower figures each containing a 'caryatid' figure, we are forced to separate figures which obviously gain immeasurably by close association. Hellas and Salamis, for example, have added significance if brought close together, while Hippodameia and Sterope would in all probability be in much more intimate connexion than Professor Gardner's arrangement allows. (iii) There is a certain artificiality about the scheme we are criticising: it would be clear that paintings, so arranged, aimed simply at disguising masonry-work, whereas I believe a certain illusion (to be explained presently) was aimed at.

This last objection necessitates a statement and justification of the old arrangement which it is here proposed to re-adopt. In this we have three groups on each of three sides.

- a.* 1. Atlas and Heracles.  
2. Theseus and Peirithous.  
3. Hellas and Salamis.
- β.* 1. Heracles and the Lion.  
2. Ajax and Cassandra.  
3. Hippodameia and Sterope.
- γ.* 1. Prometheus and Heracles.  
2. Penthesileia and Achilles.  
3. The Hesperides.

It might fairly be argued that having seen that the paintings must be placed below the cross-bar, we are justified in adopting this, the only possible, arrangement. Nevertheless, further justification will not be superfluous.

(i) According to this scheme we get in panels 1 and 3 of each side, a pair of upright figures, at rest or only in gentle action (*β* 1 is not necessarily an exception), while in each panel 2 the action is more intense (in

the case of  $\alpha$  2 the figures would doubtless be in animated conversation). As has been already remarked, we here get a certain illusion which is destroyed by Professor Gardner's arrangement: the painted figures would actually appear to be standing or struggling *beneath the throne of Zeus*. By this arrangement we obtain a distinctly poetic conception, full of religious symbolism, and such as we might expect to find in the age of Pheidias. Moreover, the dark blue of the background would in some measure at least disguise the screens themselves, making the figures appear as though they, like the figures upon the cross-bar, were standing out against a background of darkness.

(ii) Again, is it rash to trace a parallelism between the paintings on each side? There is an obvious connexion between  $\alpha$  1,  $\beta$  1, and  $\gamma$  1; and we might well call this series 'Heracleian.' In the same way the three central or 'Hellenic' panels are connected, while the three last panels have a sufficient tie in their symbolism, standing respectively for Greece, Elis, and the Mythical world.

(iii) Another consideration is of some importance. A pair of figures only in the space below the cross-bar really leave too much unoccupied space, and Greek art of this period shows a *horror vacui* as distinct as it is scientific.

(iv) Finally, if we re-adopt the old arrangement, we get, in addition to the considerations already noted, a sort of gradation: the figures nearest the rigid perpendiculars of the legs are upright or in gentle motion, with the action more free in the centre; a remote though just parallel is supplied by the pediments of the Parthenon.

Whatever weight these arguments may have, they are not sufficient to outweigh Pausanias' statement, *τελευταία δὲ ἐν τῇ γραφῇ, κ.τ.λ.*, if the ordinary interpretation of *τελευταία* be retained. In criticism of Professor Gardner's theory, it is at least curious that Pausanias should single out the last *metope* to call the 'last painting in the series.' Was not the lower panel equally important? Is it not better to take *τελευταία* in the sense of 'last scenes'<sup>5</sup> or 'lastly'? In the latter case, but putting a comma after *αὐτῇν*, we get perfectly good sense, and *τελευταία* will then cover the two final subjects. The loose use of 'lastly' might well be paralleled from any piece of modern description.

Such then is the evidence for a return to the old theory as to the paintings of Panaenus.

In conclusion, I should like to express my warmest thanks to Professor Percy Gardner for much kind criticism and encouragement, to Mr. G. F. Hill for several valuable suggestions and corrections, and also to the authorities of the Coin Department of the British Museum for furnishing me with casts of the relevant coins.

H. G. EVELYN-WHITE.

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<sup>5</sup> Since writing the above, I notice that Mr. Frazer, in his translation of the passage (*Paus.* v. 11. 6), adopts this rendering.